

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs™ - Series 100

FAQs

Revised September 23, 2011

What is the Alternate ACCESS?

Alternate ACCESS is a paper and pencil test developed specifically for English language learners who have significant cognitive disabilities. For 2012, it will be available in four grade level clusters: Grades 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. There will not be a Kindergarten form in 2012.

The test allows students to demonstrate their English language proficiency in all four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and, for Form 100 (2012), in four of the five ELP standards (social and instructional language, and the language of language arts, mathematics, and science).

Alternate ACCESS is a single form per grade cluster; it is not a tiered test. Rather, it is intended to discriminate proficiency levels at the lower end of the WIDA proficiency level continuum. In other words, Alternate ACCESS items target the Alternate Levels A1 to A3 as described by the Alternate Model Performance Indicators (AMPIs) of the WIDA standards as well as Levels 1-3 as described by the MPIs of the WIDA ELP Standards.

For whom is Alternate ACCESS intended?

The test is intended to serve the needs of English language learners who have significant cognitive disabilities that prevent meaningful participation in the regular ACCESS for ELLs. A student with significant cognitive disabilities is identified as having one or more of the existing categories of disabilities under IDEA (e.g., intellectual disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injury, multiple disabilities, etc); and their cognitive impairments may prevent them from attaining grade level achievement standards, even with the best instruction. (adapted from U.S. Department of Education: Alternate Achievement Standards of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities Non Regulatory Guidance, August 2005).

For whom is Alternate ACCESS NOT intended?

Students with disabilities who can be served with accommodations on the regular ACCESS for ELLs® assessment should continue to participate in that assessment. Participation in the Alternate ACCESS assessment cannot be solely based on a student having an IEP alone, having a certain special education disability, having emotional or behavioral difficulties, having visual,

auditory or physical disabilities, having excessive or extensive absences or social, cultural, or economic factors. Many of these factors may be taken into consideration when determining if the student meets participation criteria for the Alternate ACCESS but each of these factors alone cannot be the sole criterion for making the determination.

Who should administer Alternate ACCESS?

The test administrator:

- Must be teacher or licensed staff (e.g., Special Education Teacher, ELL Teacher, Paraprofessional, Speech Therapist, etc.)
- Have familiarity with the student, the student's needs, and the student's response and communication style

When will Alternate ACCESS be available?

Alternate ACCESS will be available beginning mid-March, 2012. We regret that it will not be available for administration during the regular testing window for states that test prior to March. However, WIDA and MetriTech, Inc. will work with states who would like to make the Alternate ACCESS available in their state outside of the regular testing window for 2012 so that all students who are eligible have an opportunity to participate in their annual ELP assessment in a meaningful way. The administration of Alternate ACCESS outside of a state's regular testing window will not have a negative impact on when score reports and data are available for ACCESS for ELLs.

How can Alternate ACCESS be ordered?

Alternate ACCESS can be ordered along with ACCESS for ELLs test materials from MetriTech, Inc. via the established order process, beginning in October 2011. Please note that even though Alternate ACCESS will not be available until March of 2012, test materials should be ordered during the regular order windows for ACCESS for ELLs, if possible. However, MetriTech, Inc. will work with districts to accommodate later orders of Alternate ACCESS materials. Please note: During the 2011-12 testing season, Alternate ACCESS will NOT be available in all WIDA states. Please check with your SEA prior to ordering any test materials.

How much will it cost?

The cost of Alternate ACCESS for 2012 will be the same per student cost as ACCESS for ELLs. Please note that payment methods vary from state-to-state. Therefore, districts that do not pay for ACCESS for ELLs currently will not pay for Alternate ACCESS, either. All test administrator training materials will be available via the WIDA website at no additional charge.

When and how will test administrator training be conducted?

Test Administrator training for the Alternate ACCESS is currently under development and final training resources will resemble what we currently have for ACCESS for ELLs. The following training resources, in addition to a test administration manual, will be developed:

1) Power Point presentations with facilitator notes for:

- Who should take the test
- Scoring

2) An asynchronous webinar/Articulate module that will be on the WIDA website within the ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator Training Course

3) Professional development workshops

Professional development topics can be requested and scheduled after October and by December. An expanded version of the tutorial for test administrators will be available in January.